MARVEL

1

RATED T+

KNULL

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KNULL

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BEHOLD...THE

KING IN BLACK

SPAWNED IN THE ABYSMAL DARK **EONS PAST,** HE HAS BEEN CALLED BY COUNTLESS NAMES.

GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES. GOD OF THE VOID. LORD OF THE ABYSS. **KNULL.**

BUT BEFORE THE MANY NAMES--BEFORE THE MYRIAD **HEINOUS DEEDS** THAT EARNED THEM--THERE WAS ONLY THE **VOID.** ALL-CONSUMING, ALL-ENCOMPASSING...

...A BLANKET OF ETERNAL DARKNESS, CLOAKING KNULL IN ITS COLD AND PEACEFUL EMBRACE. A PARADISIAL **KINGDOM OF ONE.**

UNTIL...

...THE **CELESTIALS** ARRIVED, AND WITH THEM, BURNING, TORTUROUS **LIGHT.** THESE **BRIGHT GODS** FROM AFAR DEEMED THE VOID TO BE **UNFINISHED.** BARREN.

KNULL--SUDDENLY ROUSED FROM HIS INFINITE SLUMBER--FOUND HIMSELF IN A **WAKING NIGHTMARE...**

...WATCHING AS THE CELESTIALS SET OUT TO CONSTRUCT THAT WHICH NEED **NOT** BE CONSTRUCTED. TO FILL THAT WHICH NEED **NOT** BE FILLED.

THE LIVING VOID WAS KNULL'S HOME--HIS KINGDOM. AND HE REFUSED TO SURRENDER IT WITHOUT A **FIGHT.**

WIELDING A **LIVING SWORD** FORGED FROM THE BLOOD FIRES OF A FALLEN CELESTIAL, KNULL SET OUT ACROSS THE UNIVERSE TO **PUSH BACK** AGAINST THE ENCROACHING LIGHT.

OVER TIME, THE SWORD, LIKE ITS CREATOR, BECAME KNOWN BY **MANY** NAMES. THE NECROSWORD. THE GODSLAYER. **ALL-BLACK.**

SO IT WAS, UNTIL A GOLDEN KNIGHT BRANDISHING **ALL-LIGHT**--A SPEAR POSSESSED OF POWERS **CONTRARY** TO THOSE OF ALL-BLACK--FOUGHT KNULL TO A DEBILITATING **IMPASSE.**

AS THE COSMIC FOES LAY LOCKED IN THEIR ETERNAL DEATH POSE ON THE BEFOULED SOIL OF A NAMELESS PLANET, ALL-BLACK WAS **STOLEN,** DESTINED TO WRITE LEGENDS IN THE BLOOD OF DEAD GODS IN THE HANDS OF ANOTHER...

...WHILE THE ENIGMATIC SPEAR WAS SEEMINGLY **FORGOTTEN** FOREVER.

IN TIME, KNULL WOULD RISE AGAIN, REGAINING ALL-BLACK AND RULING OVER A SYMBIOTE HORDE CREATED FROM HIS OWN LIVING ABYSS...

...PERPETUALLY BONDED BY A **HIVE MIND** TO BECOME A NEW, PERVERTED KINGDOM OF ONE.

THE SYMBIOTES BECAME **FEARED** ACROSS THE GRAND EXPANSE OF TIME AND SPACE, SPREADING KNULL'S DARK INFLUENCE EVEN AFTER THEY **TURNED** ON HIM...

...ULTIMATELY DRAWING HIM TO **PLANET EARTH** TO FACE HER GREATEST HEROES IN HIS ENDLESS WAR AGAINST THE FORCES OF LIGHT.

BUT THAT WAS **THEN.**

THIS IS NOW.

BEHOLD...

...THE KING IN BLACK.

NOT MUCH TO LOOK AT, ARE YOU...

DAEDALUS 5.

...BIG, BAD KING IN BLACK?

HSSSS...

OI. WAS THAT A *HISS?* REPTILIAN IRE FROM THE RODENT CAUGHT IN A TRAP?

HA! BLOODY HEL, THAT'S *RICH!*

WELL, SAVE YOUR BREATH, MONSTER. YOU'RE GOING *NOWHERE.*

THAT CAGE IS YOUR NEW HOME... AT LEAST UNTIL *HER HIGHNESS* DEEMS YOUR REPULSIVE FORM RIPE FOR EVICTION.

AND WHEN THAT TIME COMES-- AND IT *WILL*--BE YOU SNAKE OR RAT, SHE'LL CRUSH YOU UNDER HER BOOTS LIKE THE NOTHING YOU ARE.

SILLY FOOL.

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE *FIRST CAGE* TO HOLD ME CAPTIVE?

COMPARED TO KLYNTAR, THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN A SHODDY MAGICIAN'S STAGE PROP.

LIKE YOUR FALSE BRAVADO-- LACKING ANY TRUE SUBSTANCE...

...MERELY FOR SHOW.

AND WHEN I ESCAPE THIS SLAPDASH PRISON--AND I WILL-- YOU'LL SEE JUST HOW MUCH I DESPISE SUCH PUERILE SPECIOUSNESS.

I'LL PAINT THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE WITH THE DARK ICHOR OF MY VICTIMS, AND YOUR RANCID BLOOD WILL BE THE FIRST I DIP MY BRUSH INTO.

THAT SO, LITTLE SNAKE?

YOU FORGET I'VE A RAZOR-SHARP "PAINT-BRUSH" OF MY OWN.

PERHAPS I SHOULD--

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD AVOID TEMPTING SUCH FOOLHARDY DANGER BY STANDING SO CLOSE TO OUR SPECIAL GUEST WHILST DONNING ONE OF HIS SYMBIOTE CHILDREN, SOLDIER.

BESIDES, IT IS YOU WHO SHOULD NOT FORGET...

...THAT WE OWE HIM SO MUCH.

NOW BE GONE--

--THE GOOD GENERAL AND I REQUIRE SOME PRIVACY WITH OUR NEW FRIEND.

Y-YES, MY QUEEN.

HELLO, KNULL.

I TRUST YOU ARE COMFORTABLE.

AND I TRUST YOU WILL SQUEAL LIKE A BUTCHERED SOW, HELA, AS I RIP THE PORCINE HEART FROM YOUR BREAST.

BE CAREFUL, MY LADY...

...AS YOU SAY, HE REMAINS DANGEROUS.

TO THE GUARDS, YES.

NOT TO THEIR MISTRESS.

WHA--?

SNAPP

GYAAGH!

YOU...I'M GOING TO KILL...ALL OF YOU.

AMBITIOUS, YET DOUBTFUL.

SO, TELL ME, TYR ODINSON...

...WHAT KNOW YOU OF OUR GUEST?

HE IS A THING OF THE VOID, MY LADY.

LIKE CURSED OBLIVION, WHO LAID ME LOW IN ASGARD'S EYES AND MY OWN.

MADE ME FIT ONLY FOR YOUR SERVICE.

NOT QUITE, GENERAL.

OBLIVION IS THE GREAT END OF ALL THINGS KNULL WISHES TO BE.

OBLIVION IS THE UR DIVISOR, WHO SITS EQUAL TO THE LIVING TRIBUNAL-- HE IS THE VOID.

KNULL IS, AS YOU SO CORRECTLY STATED, ONLY OF IT.

AND HE EXISTS NOW ONLY ON A TECHNICALITY.

I'LL SLAUGHTER EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU.

IT WAS AT THE DAWN OF THE COSMOS WHEN THE CELESTIALS CHOSE KNULL TO SERVE AS THE KING IN BLACK...

...A ROLE HE HELD UNTI HE SO IMPRUDENTLY ATTACKED THE CHAMPIONS OF *MIDGARD*, ULTIMATELY FORFEITING HIS REIGN TO THE VENOM HOST OF THAT TIME...

"...THE HUMAN CALLED *EDDIE BROCK*, WHEN BROCK *INCINERATED* HIM IN THE SUN.

"BUT BROCK'S TIME AS THE KING IN BLACK WAS BRIEF, LOST THROUGH A COMBINATION OF *MISADVENTURE* AND *SELF-SABOTAGE*..."

...CREATING AN IMBALANCE IN THE UNIVERSE--A GREAT *VOID* IN THE MACHINERY OF CREATION THAT THE UNIVERSE WAS FORCED TO *CORRECT*.

AND THE GOD OF THE VOID IS *KNULL*.

IRONIC, REALLY.

WHEN NOBODY IS KING IN BLACK, YOU *RETURN*, KNULL...

...BECAUSE *YOU*, YOU EMPTY SPACE, ARE THE *GREATEST* NOBODY OF ALL.

BUT KNULL RETURNED WEAKENED, TYR--A *WISP* OF SOMETHING THAT ONCE WAS.

A VOID CONJURED MERELY TO *FILL* A VOID.

STILL, IF HE'D REMEMBERED THAT *ASGARD* EXISTED, HE MIGHT HAVE KNOWN TO AVOID MY SNARES.

BUT *NONE* OF MIDGARD DO...

...NOT EVEN *KNULL.*

SO, OUTSIDE HIS SIGHT, I GATHERED THE THREADS OF FATE IN MY GRIP...AND *BOUND* HIM WITH THEM.

AND NOW HIS STRENGTH RETURNS...

...TO *ME.*

WAIT, NO...NO...

NOOOOO!

OH...

...YES.

FWUMP

HM. LESS DARK ENERGY THAN BEFORE.

IT APPEARS YOU'RE STARTING TO OUTLIVE YOUR USEFULNESS, GOD OF NOTHINGNESS.

BUT PERHAPS THAT WILL BE YOUR FINAL ESCAPE...

...BECOMING NOTHING AGAIN.

NNNGGG...

NOTHING.

...

NOTHING!

THE ASGARDIAN WENCH IS RIGHT-- I *AM* NOTHING. I AM THE VOID.

THE GREAT ABSENCE.

TIME TO *PROVE* IT.

I'VE RETURNED, MONSTER, AND BY HER MAJESTY'S APPEARANCE, I'LL WAGER YOU TWO HAD YOURSELVES A BIT OF FUN.

THE *QUEEN*, AT LEA--

HUH?

EMPTY?

HEH. VERY CLEVER, DEMON-- YOUR LITTLE *VANISHING* ACT.

BUT I KNOW A *PARLOR* TRICK...

...WHEN I *SEE* ONE!

FSSHH

NOT A TRICK. BUT YOU WERE STILL CORRECT--THE CAGE WAS EMPTY... AND I AM THE GREAT EMPTINESS.

WHA--?

WHEN THE CAGE WAS EMPTY, I WAS IN THE CAGE...

WHERE?

...BUT THE ROOM WAS EMPTY TOO.

SWAMP

AHH, YES, THAT'S IT... RETURN TO ME, MY CHILD.

AWAY FROM THIS INSIGNIFICANT BLIGHT.

MUCH BETTER. MY STRENGTH INCREASES.

DEATH IS THE VOID OF LIFE AFTER ALL, CHILD. EVERY DEATH THE *END* OF A UNIVERSE.

GRANTED, A *SMALL* UNIVERSE FROM SUCH AN UNIMPORTANT CREATURE AS THAT...

KLUNK

...BUT IT WILL DO FOR NOW.

THE PRISONER'S ESCAPED!

STOP WHERE YOU ARE!

AS YOU...

...WISH.

HOW--?

HRGK!

RIP

QUICKLY, MY CHILD-- COME TO ME.

WE HAVE LITTLE TIME.

JORGENS IS DOWN!

HURRY!

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO LEAP FARTHER, MY CHILDREN...

...BECOME ANY EMPTY SPACE IN THE UNIVERSE.

YOU--

BUT THE UNIVERSE IS SO VERY FULL.

SHMP

SO PACKED WITH LIGHT AND LIFE...

...AND ACCURSED STARS.

KRAKK

AND I AM STILL WEAK.

STILL TIRED.

SHRPP

THESE SMALL TRICKS ARE ALL I CAN MUSTER...

"...FOR NOW."

WHERE, WHERE, WHERE...?

THERE!

EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED, MY CHILDREN, I'M EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT.

I ONCE FLEW ACROSS THE EXPANSE OF THE UNIVERSE ON THE BACK OF A MAJESTIC DRAGON OF LIVING DARKNESS.

AND NOW I'M REDUCED TO PILFERING THIS PITIFUL MACHINE.

I MUST REGAIN MY FULL STRENGTH...

"...BUT HOW?"

EXCELLENT.

OUR FORMER GUEST IS PLAYING *DIRECTLY* INTO MY HANDS.

I'M NOT SO *CERTAIN* OF THAT, MY LADY...

...WITH ALL RESPECT, THIS IS A *DANGEROUS GAME* YOU PLAY.

MIDGARD IS *CUT OFF* FROM ALL OTHER REALMS. IT IS ONLY BY *CHANCE* THAT WE WERE HERE WHEN THE *RAINBOW BRIDGE* WAS DESTROYED.*

*SEE *IMMORTAL THOR #25* --JDW

'TIS TRUE--WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD *GREAT POWER* IN MIDGARD... WITH NO INTERFERENCE. BUT SHOULD WE FAIL, THERE IS *NO* RETREAT.

IS IT REALLY WORTH GAMBLING SO MUCH JUST TO STEAL A LITTLE MORE *POWER* FROM KNULL?

WHY, GENERAL, YOUR TREPIDATION *DISAPPOINTS* ME.

SURELY YOU UNDERSTAND THAT AN *ALMOST* QUEEN IN BLACK IS *NO* QUEEN IN BLACK AT ALL, YES?

NO, I MUST HAVE IT ALL--*ALL* KNULL'S POWER. BUT I CANNOT TEAR IT AWAY FROM HIM BY FORCE...

...*NOT* WITH THE MAGICS I CURRENTLY POSSESS.

HE MUST GIVE UP THE LAST OF HIS DARK KINGDOM OF HIS OWN *FREE WILL*, AND I'VE PLACED HIM ON THE PATH TO DO JUST THAT.

THE ONLY MOVE HE CAN MAKE IN THIS GAME NOW IS THE ONE THAT WILL *ENSURE* MY VICTORY.

BUT IF IT'S *CERTAINTY* YOU SEEK, IT'S CERTAINTY I SHALL *PROVIDE.*

KNULL'S A STUBBORN OLD GOAT--HE MAY NEED A *SHEPHERD.*

IT'S TIME TO MAKE A CALL...

"...TO AN OLD FLAME."

TO BE CONTINUED.

NEXT

2

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